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SAFETY FOR DEMOCRACIES

THE length of the present war depends upon the action of the German government, and that there is to be some action within that government soon is apparent. The Reichstag, inspired in no small measure, we believe, by the crystal utterances of President Wilson, seems bent upon clearing up the German political situation. The Emperor's many conferences are not without significance. It would seem that he is forced at last to give heed unto the demands for suffrage reforms in Prussia, indeed for a parliamentarized Germany. The three big parties, with Dr. Mathais Erzberger leading the centrists, Philip Scheidemann leading the socialists, and the National Liberals, find themselves increasingly in accord upon the basic principles of internal Teuton reforms. These parties have sensed, as have many leading persons at the Hapsburg court, that the one great obstacle to the cessation of war is the Prussian system. The intolerable egotisms and self-seeking machinations of that system are becoming more and more intolerable to the disillusionized subjects of the Central Powers. From Erzberger's speech before the star-chamber session of the main committee of the Reichstag, it is clear that leading Prussians are beginning to sense the meaning of the words "the world safe for democracies." It is becoming more and more evident that the German people are ashamed to be thought slaves of their military caste. Out of the ruins of German junkerism there is certain to arise a finer German democracy. The sooner this arrives the sooner will the war end.

But the accomplishment of this will be no easy thing. The military reactionists are still very powerful. The royal families throughout the German states are naturally anxious to retain their royal prerogatives. For them democracy spells disruption. The Kaiser's rescript, supplementing his Easter proposal, paves the way for equal franchise, not in some remote period subsequent to the war, but early enough that "the next elections may take place according to the new franchise." If this brings consternation to the royal families of Germany, it brings an infinite hope to the rest of humanity.

It must now be apparent to the Prussian party in power that they are doomed. The success of the Russian democracy removes any bases for the charge made by the Imperial German Chancellor July 26, 1914, that Russia "has to bear the entire responsibility." But, which is more to the point, that success must hearten immeasurably

the liberal forces throughout mid-Europe. The failure of the imperial coup in China must have a similar effect upon the Germany of "Me and God," "The Day," and a Kaiser recommending the methods of the Hun during the Boxer rebellion. The last considerable remnant of the divine rights of kings is on the downward path within Germany itself.

This does not mean that Germany shall cease to exist. It means that Germany will begin to live. The destruction of the military party in Germany is, indeed, the only method left to Germany of protecting and conserving her existence. It is the German military spirit, not confined wholly to German territory we regret to say, that has led to the commission of all the unlawful acts against innocent and unoffending states. Of such is the essence of military leadership especially in mid-Europe. Its philosophy is the philosophy of force, and force primarily. It ignores what the rest of the world is more rapidly learning, namely: that above physical force is that greater and more enduring psychical force out of which springs the hope and progress of the world. If any one is in doubt about the meaning of "the world safe for democracies," let him watch carefully the evolution of the popular will during the next few years within what is now the German hegemony.

A PROPITIOUS PEACE AND A GOVERNED WORLD

THE dictionary definition of "propitious" indicates that one so described is "ready to grant a favor or indulgence; kind; disposed to be gracious or merciful; ready to forgive and bestow favors." Can the Allied Nations in the day of victory present such a propitiatory attitude to the conquered? Can they maintain it through the wrangles and disputes of a peaceful settlement?

These questions are pertinent in the light of a recent pronouncement of the French Premier at the final session of the fourth convocation of the "Parlement Interallié" in Paris, typical of a number of similar statements recently made in France. M. Ribot, after declaring France's earnest desire for a peace that will transcend the *status quo ante*, and which will not "oppress any people, any nation, not even those who are our enemies today," passed on to a qualifying sentence in which may be found sinister auguries for the spirit of propitiation and an enduring peace: